

# THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

BY W. H. WITHROW, M.A.

"The men who traffic in ardent spirit, and sell to all who will buy, are poisoners general; they murder his Majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither do their eyes pity or spare."—*John Wesley.*

"Round about the caldron go;  
In the poisoned entrails throw.  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble—  
Double, double, toil and trouble;  
Fire, burn; and, caldron, bubble."

—*Macbeth.*

NOTHING so effectually counter-works God's purposes of grace, bans the souls that He would bless, and destroys the bodies of mankind as the giant evil—Intemperance.

It is the ally of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, the incentive to every lust and sin, to every crime and violence, to every cruelty and wrong. Like the dread apocalyptic vials of wrath poured out upon the earth, this fiery curse has spread with the virulence of no other plague that ever blasted the world, and has burnt over the earth with its scoriac rivers of fire. No land has been unscathed, from frozen sea to tropic strand; from insular Britain to its far antipodes. Entire races have melted away at the breath of this pestilence like snow before the summer's sun. But the most dreadful darkness of this shadow of death, its deepest and most dire eclipse of woe has been in so-called Christian lands. There the air has been

Full of farewells for the dying  
And weeping for the dead,

for, as in the last great and terrible plague of Egypt, in almost every house has lain some slain victim of the traffic. Yet still the

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work of death goes on ; still this wine-press of wrath is trodden out by "Christian" feet ; still the Moloch fires of the distilleries redden the midnight heavens. "Their worm dieth not on the holy sabbath ; on that hallowed day when all other things with any quality of goodness or salvation in them rest—the still-worm, twin reptile of the worm that never dies, works on with all the infernal energy of its kind. It works on while the people who live by its profits are singing psalms in the house of God ! That still-worm works on like sin, and for the wages of sin. It works when all honest things are still and night hangs heavy on the world. It works on to feed the appetites it has kindled to life—appetites which ever become more imperious, crying out like the grave, 'Give! give!'"\*

Therefore, God who is forever and implacably opposed to sin, and wages eternal war against it, especially menaces with the most terrible maledictions of His wrath, this direst of all sins. The seven-fold curse of His eternal indignation is denounced against the agents, aiders, or abettors of this red traffic in blood—in the bodies and the souls of men. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink" sounds the prophetic thunder of His Holy Word.

This pernicious traffic, more than anything else, retards the progress of the gospel, and erects a kingdom of darkness in the midst of Christendom, consigning millions of baptized men to a life of sin and misery and ignorance far worse than any in the realms of darkest paganism. It excludes men from the kingdom of heaven and makes them the heirs of wrath and death eternal. It everywhere creates and fosters crime and pauperism, irreligion and vice ; causes physical and mental disease ; shortens life, and often sends the soul into the presence of its Maker by an act of self-slaughter, or crimsoned with the guilt of murder. It is the cause of much of the Sabbath desecration, profanity, and abounding wickedness that are the reproach of Christian civilization. By its malign influence, many who might be useful members of society and ornaments of the community, become its moral lepers and lazars, disseminating pollution and misery all around them. It makes of the streets of a Christian metropolis, reeking with

\* Thos. Begg's "World's Temperance Convention."—Introduction, p. x.

their "immortal sewerage"\* of sinful souls, with their vile orgies, their haunts of vice and traps for virtue, a very pandemonium of profligacy and crime.

The waste of food, and its conversion into liquid poison caused by the liquor traffic, we contend, is contrary to the will of God, and is therefore sinful and immoral. It needs no laboured argument to demonstrate this truth. It surely is self-evident to every candid mind. God created every herb and every tree, in all their vast variety and manifold excellence, to be food for man—to minister to the necessities and the enjoyment of the creatures He hath made. The great staples of human existence—the cereal grains and fruits and vegetables of the earth—contain all the elements which are necessary for the upbuilding of the body and for its maintenance in a condition of health and vigour. Yet there is hardly a single production of the soil, which is fit for food that man has not perverted from its proper use, to the manufacture of poisonous and intoxicating liquors, which are injurious in the highest degree to both body and soul.

In this process all the food-making elements are destroyed. The process of fermentation is literally one of putrefaction, by which the wholesome grain or luscious grape is changed from healthful food to death-dealing poison. Hence the hackneyed assertion that wine is a good creature of God, and therefore to be received with thanksgiving is as false as it is common. The corn, in its golden gleaming, and the grape in its purple bloom, are indeed His good creatures which make glad the heart of man; but the alcoholic principle, which perverted ingenuity has tortured from them in the process of their putrefaction, and which is not found in the universe except as the offspring of corruption and decay, is in no sense a good creature of God, any more than the fetid gases by which its evolution is accompanied, or than the opium, strychnine, prussic acid, or arsenic, which man is able, chemically, to isolate from the vegetable or mineral substances with which they are held in innocent combination.

The immense waste of food caused by the manufacture of alcoholic beverages is perfectly appalling. According to a statement of the United Kingdom Alliance, in a single year there

\* The expression is the Rev. Sidney Godolphin Osborne's.

were destroyed in the manufacture of beer and spirits, in the United Kingdom, 52,659,000 bushels of grain. This would, as food, supply nearly six millions of people with bread.

"In consequence of this great destruction of grain," says the Report, "we have to buy every year from other countries from 20 to 30 millions of pounds' worth of food, which drains this country of capital that might be spent on our own manufactures, and thereby greatly improve our trade and commerce."

It has been computed that there are in England 1,093,741 acres of land devoted to the growth of barley for malting, besides 56,000 acres of the best land devoted to the growth of hops, a weed which contains not the least nourishment, and which, when used habitually, is positively injurious. Thus, there are, not including 350,000 acres more, devoted to raising the materials for cider and perry, 1,149,741 acres of land, which, notwithstanding the increasing pressure of the population on the means of subsistence, are perverted from the production of food to the production of pernicious and poisonous beverages, which are sapping the strength and destroying the industrial habits and moral principles of the people.

This land would produce, on a low average,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  quarters of wheat per acre, or 4,024,093 $\frac{1}{2}$  quarters of wheat altogether, from the land now growing malt and hops. Now, a quarter of wheat yields about 350lbs. of flour; therefore, this land would yield no less than 1,408,432,725lbs. of flour. Flour increases about one-third in being made bread; so this quantity would produce 1,877,910,300lbs. of bread, or sufficient to maintain 5,144,937 persons—or nearly the entire population of the kingdom of Ireland, or over one-sixth of that of the whole of Great Britain—for a full year. Better far that this immense amount of food should be gathered into heaps and burned rather than that it should be converted into that noxious draught that ruins the health, degrades the character, and impoverishes the nation.

At 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound this quantity of bread, thus worse than wasted, would amount to £11,736,937 7s. 6d., a sum sufficient to pay the entire poor rate for nearly two years.

On careful computation of the comparative expenditure on liquor and on bread, it is estimated that fully as much is thrown

away on those injurious beverages as is expended in the purchase of the staff of life by the entire population. Nearly a hundred years ago John Wesley, in a pamphlet on "The Present Scarcity of Provisions," inquires, "Why is food so dear?" and asserts the grand cause to have been the immense consumption of grain in distilling. "Have we not reason to believe," he says, "that little less than half the corn produced in the kingdom is every year consumed, not by so harmless a way as throwing it into the sea, but by converting it into deadly poison; poison that not only destroys the life, but the morals of our countrymen? Tell it not in Constantinople," he exclaims in patriotic shame, "that the English raise the royal revenue by selling the flesh and blood of their countrymen!"

The immense disproportion between the consumption of wholesome food and baneful liquor, is shown by the following statistics of the London provision supply: To 3,000 grocers, 2,500 bakers, 1,700 butchers, and 3,500 other provision dealers, making an aggregate of 10,700 engaged in the supply of food, there were no less than 11,000 public-houses dealing out disease and death, both bodily and spiritual, to the people.

In Scotland the statistics of forty towns—a good sample of the whole country—show a still more deplorable state of things. While it requires 981 of the population to support a baker, 1,067 to keep a butcher, and 2,281 to sustain a bookseller, every 149 support a dram-shop. This reminds one of Falstaff's "ha'penny worth of bread and intolerable deal of sack," and is a sad comment on the social condition of one of the most Christian and enlightened countries on the face of the earth.

Even in the Dominion of Canada, with its population of only 4,000,000, there were destroyed in a single year over 2,000,000 bushels of grain in the manufacture of liquor, besides 380,787lbs. of sugar and syrup. From this was manufactured 11,513,732 gallons of intoxicating liquor, or nearly four gallons each for every man, woman, and child in the Dominion. This fact is indeed an augury of ill omen for its future prosperity. A worm—the worm of the still—is already gnawing at its heart and destroying its very vitals.

In the United States, in a single year, there were consumed

540,000,000 gallons of intoxicating liquor, or the enormous quantity of thirteen and a-half gallons to every living soul in the nation, or two and a-half gallons of proof spirit. In the manufacture of this deluge of strong drink there were destroyed 62,000,000 bushels of grain and fruit, or nearly two bushels to each individual in the land.

Had we the complete statistics of the destruction of food in the manufacture of intoxicating drinks throughout Christendom, we would be overwhelmed with astonishment and dismay.

Thus does this hideous traffic take the food from the mouths of millions, and by an infernal alchemy transmute it into a loathsome draught which maddens and destroys mankind. This is no mere rhetorical figure, but a sober literal fact. During the horrors of the famine-year of 1847-8 in Ireland—that dread carnival of death, when hunger-bitten men and women were literally dying of starvation in the streets—the grain which God gave to supply the wants of His children was borne by waggon loads into the vast distilleries and breweries of Belfast (we have the testimony of an eye-witness to the fact), and there, for all the purposes of food, destroyed; nay, as if to aid the task of famine and of fever in their work of death, it was changed into a deadly curse, which swept away more human lives than both those fatal agencies together.

Dr. Lees thus eloquently describes the horrors of that famine-year: "Mobs of hungry, and often dissipated poor, paraded the streets, headed by drunken and infuriated women crying for *bread*. Was there at that period a natural and inevitable famine? No such thing! It was distinctly proved that we had an ample supply of food for all the natural wants of the people; and that the impending horrors of starvation might be averted by stopping the breweries and distilleries in their work of destruction. Wasted and wailing children wandered through the streets; yet appetite went on to the next tavern and drank the bread of those innocents dissolved in gin. Famished mothers walked the village lanes, where briery scents and blossoms mocked their hunger. Respectability cast the hungered one a copper and passed on to drink its beer. The publican, while the voice of hunger and suffering ascended to the skies, still went on dispens-



ing the pernicious product ; above all, sanctioning all, waved the banner of the mistaken law: '*Licensed to destroy food and create famine.*' That period of indifference is a blot upon our history—an indelible stain upon our patriotism and humanity. The work of waste and wickedness went on. Half a million of souls were sacrificed to the traffic." \*

It needs no lengthened argument to demonstrate that such unhallowed destruction of the staff of life of God's great family of the poor awakens His most intense displeasure. The whole spirit of the beneficent legislation of the Hebrew commonwealth, the denunciation of the oppressors of the poor, and the express declaration of Holy Writ, "He that withholdeth the corn, the people shall curse him," all attest the loving care for the creatures of His hand of the great All-Father who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.

Even where starvation does not ensue from this wicked destruction of grain, the increased difficulty of obtaining a sufficient amount of food for the sustenance of life—always difficult enough, God knows, to thousands—makes their lives bitter unto them, abridges their comforts, impairs their health, shortens their existence, and makes it, instead of a period of enjoyment, one long and hopeless conflict with hunger, want and woe, the only refuge from which is the refuge of the grave. Such iniquitous waste and abuse of God's bounties is contrary to the entire spirit and letter, scope, tenor, and design of His gospel of good-will to men. So abhorrent in His sight is all waste of human food, that, after a stupendous miracle of its creation, He gave the command, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." What words, therefore, shall fittingly describe their guilt, who diligently gather immense stores of necessary food, for lack of which vast multitudes must suffer, for the very purpose of its wholesale destruction and perversion to the vilest ends!

Even the *Times* newspaper, speaking of this waste of food, says: "It is far too favourable a view to treat the money spent on it as if it were cast into the sea. It would have been better if the corn had mildewed in the ear. . . No way so rapid to increase the wealth of nations and the morality of society, as the

\* "Argument for Prohibition," pp. 127-8.

utter annihilation of the manufacture of ardent spirits, constituting as they do an infinite waste and an unmixed evil."

No man has a right to burn his corn stacks and then appeal to his neighbour for bread. Yet, practically, the manufacture of liquor produces precisely similar results. Never was there a more gigantic illustration of the adage, that "Wilful waste makes woeful want," than the results of the liquor traffic, for nowhere do poverty and misery so abound as where spirituous liquors are most largely manufactured. Much of the agricultural distress of Britain and other countries is directly caused in this way.

In the island of Mull, in Scotland, some years since, £3,000 were contributed to keep the people from starvation, yet more than twice that amount was spent on whisky. During the Lancashire cotton famine, when money flowed in from all English-speaking lands to relieve the starving operatives, the breweries were in full blast destroying the food of the people, and more money was spent in liquor in the famine district than would have maintained the entire population in comfort during the entire period of depression in trade. If any Government, at a time when the wail of famine rose upon the air, and gaunt-eyed hunger clamoured for bread, were to authorize the gathering of immense heaps of grain and its consumption to ashes, it would be hurled by an indignant people with execration from its place; yet it may permit the change of the same food to a death-dealing poison—a crime a thousand-fold worse—not only with impunity, but with applause.

The table of imports into Ireland during a period of scarcity, when the distilleries were closed, show that there was a greatly increased consumption of excisable articles; so we see that a year of famine, *with prohibition*, is better than a year of plenty without it.

Moreover, nothing so prevents the progress of religion in the world, and frustrates God's gracious purposes for the salvation of the race, as the traffic in strong drink, and its inevitable consequence, intemperance. For this reason also that traffic is especially obnoxious in His sight. It leads men to waste upon their lusts the material wealth, of which they are but His stewards, instead of promoting therewith the great policy for which the



Son of God became incarnate. It is asserted by Dr. John Campbell that Protestant and pious Britain annually spends *thirty times* as much for strong drink as she spends for the world's salvation. During the last year the expenditure of the British and Foreign Bible Society was £217,390 19s. 10d., and the number of copies of the Scriptures circulated was 2,619,427. Even at this gigantic scale of operations it would take over three hundred years to supply every poor heathen in the world with a copy of the Word of God. In the same year there was spent in Great Britain alone £100,000,000 on intoxicating drinks. This money, thus worse than wasted, would give a copy of God's Word, in his own mother tongue, to every son and daughter of Adam on the face of the earth in less than one year!

Even in the Mission field itself the evil effects of the traffic and its dread concomitants make themselves felt; marring the efforts and frustrating the toils of the agents of the Churches.

In consequence of the prevalence of drinking habits among European residents in India, we are told on the authority of a returned Missionary that the word drunkard and *Christian* have become synonymous terms among the native castes. When the pagan Hindoo wishes to represent the Christian Englishman, he begins to stagger in his gait to counterfeit inebriation.

"The very ships," says Mr. Thos. Begg,\* "that bore the Missionaries and messengers of salvation to heathen lands were often freighted with intoxicating liquors, which, like some of the plagues, unvialled in the apocalypse, were let loose to drown in their burning deluge every grain of Christianity before it could germinate in the heart of the half-enlightened heathen. They fired his nature with lusts foreign to the brute, and which never raged in his appetites, nor infuriated his passions before his contact with the vices of civilization. The spirit of intemperance, malignant ghost of the bottomless pit, slew its tens of thousands; and one sweeping fiery curse followed in the wake of Christian commerce."

The liquor traffic, too, was the chief support of the slave trade, that foulest crime, in the history of Great Britain, that trailed her meteor flag, dishonoured, through the dust. English merchants

\* "Report of World's Temperance Convention."—Intro. viii.

and English sailors, beneath the redcross banner of freedom, plied their nefarious calling of slave-stealers and slave-traders, and made that badge of liberty the livery of disgrace. And rum, fiery rum, was the instrument of barter for the bodies and the souls of men. "It was," writes Mr. Begg, "at a premium over minted gold in the slave-factories of the African coast. It fired the fierce lusts of the natives with a craving which their own slow liquors could not kindle."

Thank God, that blot, at least, is removed from the escutcheon of our country. The Nemesis of the people's wrath descended, and smote this direful curse from British soil for ever. But still, its twin-crime, the liquor traffic, continues to enslave the bodies and the souls of men in a bondage more galling than even African servitude. Oh, that the people, in the majesty of their might, would arise and banish it from the face of the earth forever!

Nothing so counterworks the evangelistic agencies in operation, at home as well as abroad, as the vice of intemperance. It hardens the heart, steels the conscience, and deadens the soul to every religious feeling, and thus prevents the due influence of gospel truth on the community. Not only does this evil beast, lying ever in wait for the unwary, prevent men entering the Church of Christ; it also prowls around the fold, and snatches thousands yearly from its sheltering embrace. As "when the sons of God came together, Satan came also with them," so even among the ministrants at God's altar, ordained to the perpetual handling of holy things, this hideous vice appears, and the abomination of desolation is set up, even in the sacred places of the sanctuary. Universal testimony asserts that this is the most frequent cause of apostasy, both in the pulpit and the pew, the foul stain upon the snowy robe of Christianity, the chiefest blight upon her bloom. This vice seizes the children of our Sunday-schools, effaces the holy lessons written on their hearts, and changes them to a foul palimpsest, inscribed all over with the vile characters of sin. Many of them find their way to prison, and figure in the annals of crime. Of 1,050 boys in the Salford prison-school, 977 had attended Sunday-school. Of 10,361 inmates of the principal prisons and penitentiaries of Great Britain,

no fewer than 6,572 had previously received instruction in Sabbath-schools.

"Give me the little children,"

Cries Crime, with a wolfish grin,

"Let me train up the children

In the pleasant paths of sin!"

Many are thus prevented from entering the Sunday-school at all. In forbidding the little children, the tender lambs of Christ, who are especially included in the covenant of grace, and for whom such careful provision is made in the Christian economy—to come to Christ, the traffic especially excites the indignation of the blessed Saviour who rebuked His own disciples for the same offence, saying, "Suffer the children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Yet it is estimated from the statistics of intemperance, that an average of one boy in eight grows up to be a drunkard. Think of it, parents, as you look upon your household darlings—the olive branches around your board. On which of *your* boys shall fall this fearful doom; or, more dreadful still, which of your *girls* will you resign to this death-in-life, far worse than death itself? Would you not rather see them in their graves?

The noble phalanx of home missionaries, Bible-women, tract distributors, and other labourers for the evangelization of the masses, all bear testimony, in very bitterness of spirit, that the liquor traffic is the greatest barrier to the success of their efforts.

A hundred years ago, when that traffic had not nearly attained the gigantic magnitude it now possesses, John Wesley said, "We verily believe that the single sin of intemperance is destroying more souls than all the ministers in Britain are instrumental in saving."

More recently, Lord Brougham said, "Into whatever path the philanthropist may strike, the drink demon starts up before him and blocks his way."

The ignorant and irreligious masses of the people continue to multiply beyond every effort of the Church to provide evangelistic agency. Underneath the decorous surface of society a great weltering mass of infidelity, drunkenness, profligacy, and vice, continues to seethe and struggle; ever and anon breaking

through the thin crust of repression in those volcanic outbursts of appalling wickedness, which are the reproach of our modern civilization. The Helots of Christian England, through the tyranny of the liquor traffic, are held in a more abject bondage than that of ancient Sparta,—a bondage not only of the body, but of soul, heart, brain, and everything that makes the man, to the foul dominion of an animal passion, of a brutal lust.

Under the very shadows of the churches, and surrounded by Christian institutions, hundreds of thousands live in practical heathenism, utterly ignoring God and everything pure, and holy, and divine; or using His sacred name only to blaspheme and to invoke His maledictions on their souls. In the city of London alone,—the great heart of Christendom, from which go forth pulsing tides of holy effort which are felt to the ends of the earth,—are over a million of souls who never enter the house of God, nay, for most of whom there is no church accommodation even if they desired it. In Glasgow, the great industrial centre of pious, Presbyterian Scotland, one-half, and in Edinburgh one-third of the population, attend no place of worship. Nor are other towns much better; and even throughout the rural districts the plague of irreligion and indifference has spread, till millions live and die heathens in the midst of Christendom. In the words of Dr. Guthrie, that eloquent advocate of the outcast and the poor, "They know no Sabbath, read no Bible, enter no place of worship, and care neither for God nor man; bells might have been mute, and pulpits silent, and church doors shut for them. So far as they cared or were concerned, the cross, with its blessed bleeding burden, might never have stood on Calvary." It has been truly said that many parts of heathen lands, to which missionaries have been sent, are a paradise compared with many places in the very heart of London.

Such a scene is thus vividly described by Professor Kingsley, that champion of the rights of England's poor: "Go, scented Belgravians, and see what London is. Look! there is not a soul down that yard but is either beggar, drunkard, thief, or worse. Write anent that! Say how ye saw the mouth of hell, and the twa pillars thereof at the entry—the pawnbroker's shop o' one side, and the gin-palace at the other—twa monstrous deevils,

eating up men and women and bairns, body and soul. Look at the jaws o' the monsters, how they open, and open and swallow in anither victim and anither. Write anent *that!* . . . Are not they a mair damnable, man-devouring idol than any red-hot statue of Moloch, or wicker Magog, wherein the auld Britons burnt their prisoners?"\*

Upon God's holy day, with the sacred sound of the Sabbath bells calling to the place of prayer, the vile orgies of drunkenness are celebrated, like a carnival of fiends; and British bacchanals and mœnads wanton in revels, more like those of Gomorrah, than scenes in a Christian land. With heaven-defying impiety, multitudes trample God's commands beneath their feet, profane His day and blaspheme His name. It would seem sometimes as if the seven deadly sins were let loose, the seven last plagues poured out, and pandemonium set up on earth. This British idolatry is more loathsome and degrading than that of Juggernaut. If St. Paul walked the streets of London his soul would be moved with deeper indignation at these Christian vices than even at the superstitions of the Athenians.

In the intelligent city of Manchester, every beer, wine, or spirit shop was visited by the Committee of the Manchester and Salford Temperance Society on the Sabbath-day, and the number of those who entered during *legal hours* accurately counted. For though *food* may not be sold on Sunday, this pernicious *drink* is vended under the sanction and protection of the law. The number of houses was 1,437; the number of visitors, men, 120,124; women, 71,609; children, 23,585; total, 215,318; about half of the entire population of Manchester, although many may have made several visits. We shall not pollute these pages with an account of the scenes that were witnessed in that Christian city on the Lord's Day. One district is described as a "perfect hell upon earth." One house, the "Swan Inn," was visited by 1,732 persons during the day. Many of the visitors were of very tender years. What fearful Sabbath desecration is thus caused! Besides this, it is said that there are 40,000 malsters in Great Britain employed all day long every Sunday in the

\* "Alton Locke."

manufacture of the liquor, to say nothing of those who are engaged in its sale.

The clerical testimony as to the effects of the traffic on the work of the Churches reported by the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury confirms the truth of the statements above made. The following are specimens of their evidence :—

“ No drunkard attends the ordinances of religion.”

“ Sabbath-breaking, swearing and drunkenness are vices that go together.”

“ Many dare not face the pulpit.”

“ Those who drink most worship least.”

“ Produces practical atheism.”

“ Causes prodigious immorality.”

“ The violent and painful deaths of drunkards are no warning. One was roasted to death on a lime-kiln, and the same day his two sons consoled themselves by a drunken debauch.”

“ Men elect to give up Christ rather than the ale-house.”

Archdeacon Garbitt says, “ No organization, no zeal, no piety however devoted, no personal labours however apostolic, will avail to effect any solid amelioration in the presence of the traffic.”

Rev. Canon Stowell, M.A., says, “ That dark and damnable traffic has turned the day of God almost into a day of Satan, and has made it questionable whether, for the mass of the people, it would not be better to have no Sunday at all.”

The debauch begins on Saturday night, and frequently lasts all through the Sabbath and far into the week. It is said that 30,000 people go to bed drunk in Glasgow every Saturday night. The ale-house is their church, drinking their worship and liquor their God. This vice turns the milk of human kindness into the gall of bitterness and hate; and converts the love of wife and child into a demoniac frenzy, impelling the human fiend to their destruction. *This* is the cause of that brutal wife-beating, which on the continent is considered the national characteristics of an Englishman, and not that he is in anywise devoid of the natural affections.

Besides those flagrant crimes, of which intemperance is the



fruitful cause, every form of vice and evil is fostered, and stimulated, and often created by the liquor traffic. Especially is this true of that great sin and sorrow of large cities, which is known as pre-eminently the "social evil,"—that hideous vice, which blasts the fairest bloom of beauty, which tramples beneath satyr feet upon the cruel streets those blighted flowers that might have flourished fair in dear home gardens but for the lusts of sinful men ;

"That blurs the blush and grace of modesty.  
Makes virtue hypocrite ; takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there ; makes marriage vows  
As false as dicers oaths."

These sad waifs of humanity,—of whom there are ten thousand in the awful vortex of London alone,—blasted forever for the sins of the people, at once the victims and the Nemesis of society, are invariably sustained in their death-in-life, and enabled to ply their loathely trade by the stimulation of liquor ; and among the devotees of the bowl are their guilty partners in debauchery chiefly found. The almost universal testimony of these unhappy daughters of sin and shame is, that they were betrayed to endless infamy when their passions were inflamed, their reason dethroned, and the upbraidings of conscience drowned, through the influence of strong drink.

The most frequent known incentive to the heaven-defying crime of suicide is intemperance ; either as the cause of domestic misery, mental depression, or libertine life ; or, as inflaming the mind and nerving the hand to the immediate commission of the fatal deed. We have also seen that it otherwise destroys the lives of 60,000 persons every year, one hundred and sixty every day, or seven every hour. In view of these appalling facts every lover of his race must share the feeling expressed by the prophet : "O that mine head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people !"

This national vice produces also national degeneracy and degradation, debauches the public conscience, is the facile instrument of bribery and political corruption, and leads British

electors to betray their country into the hands of demagogues and social pirates, and to barter their birthright as freemen for a vile mess of pottage. Instances are known where as much as £20,000 have been expended at a single election in thus corrupting the morals of the people, sapping the foundations of the Constitution and destroying the palladium of the public liberty.

Every criminal or economical statistician bears witness that the amount of crime and pauperism is in a direct ratio to the extent of the liquor trade. By some of the highest authorities the proportion of these evils directly attributable to intemperance is placed as high as nine-tenths, or even as ninety-nine hundredths. Irrefutable evidence of the truth of this stupendous assertion will hereafter be adduced.

It will not be denied that intemperance is the mother of ignorance, that fruitful cause of social debasement and crime.

Horace Mann asserts, "Intemperance is a upas tree planted in the field of education, and before education can flourish this tree must be cut down."

This is also strikingly confirmed by the statistics of Ragged Schools, as given by Dr. Guthrie. Fully ninety-nine hundredths of the scholars in those schools, he asserts, are the children of drunkards. With pathetic eloquence he exclaims: "With respect to them I may put into the mouth of our country the complaint, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Ignorance is their sole, sad inheritance. They are punished for it, impoverished for it, imprisoned for it, banished for it, hanged for it. The 'voice heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping' falls on our ears. Rachel is weeping for her children. Herod is dead, yet the innocents are slaughtered. Subjects in the time past only thought of punishment, I call on Justice to sheathe the sword, and lift up her shield, and throw it over the heads of these unhappy children. And next, I call on Religion to leave her temples, and, like a mother seeking a lost child, to go forth to the streets, and gather in those infants for Jesus' arms—save those gems for a Saviour's crown."

We have thus endeavoured to show the sinfulness and immorality of the conversion of the people's food into a liquid

poison, which naturally destroys not only their bodies but their souls. In view of the accumulated wickedness and misery caused by that traffic, small wonder that the indignation of that Christian philanthropist just quoted finds expression in this solemn indictment: "Before God and man, before the Church and the world, I impeach Intemperance. I charge it with the murder of innumerable souls. I charge it as the cause of almost all the poverty, and crime, and misery, and ignorance, and irreligion, that disgrace and afflict the land. I do in my conscience believe that these intoxicating stimulants have sunk into perdition more men and women than found a grave in that deluge, which swept over the highest hill-tops, engulfing a world of which but eight were saved." Of other vices, as compared with this, it might be said, "They have slain their thousands, but Intemperance its tens of thousands."

The whole system is accursed. It scorches, scars, and brands all who come nigh it, or have aught to do with it. There is contamination and pollution in its very contact. The drunkard himself is guilty of moral suicide. "This vice," said St. Augustine, fourteen hundred years ago, "is a flattering devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin, which, whosoever doth commit, committeth not a single sin, but becomes the slave of all manner of sin."

But the most solemn and awful responsibility rests upon the manufacturers and dealers connected with this vile traffic. "I would rather," says John B. Gough, "be what I have been as a drunkard, than I would be the man to stand behind the counter and give him the drink that made him drunk." The purest moralists of every age agree in the denunciation of this traffic in blood. "I never see the sign 'licensed to sell spirits,' " says McCheyne, "without thinking it a license to ruin souls. Wretched men, do you not know that every penny that rings on your counter shall eat your flesh as if it were fire; that every drop of liquid poison swallowed in your gas-lit palaces, will only serve to kindle up the flame of the fire that is not quenched."

Lord Viscount Lonsdale, in the debate on the Gin Bill, in 1743, said: "I must look upon every man who takes out a license as a sort of devil set up to tempt men to get drunk."

The Rev. Albert Barnes writes: "The great principles of the

Bible, the spirit of the Bible and a thousand texts of the Bible, are pointed against it; and every step the trafficker takes he infringes on the spirit and bearing of some declaration of God."

We have over and over again seen the stern vehemence with which John Wesley denounces this godless traffic.

Even the publicans themselves have not the approval of their conscience in the wretched trade. "There is no hope for me," said one in a dying hour, "for I have been making a living at the mouth of hell." Another who had spent years in the traffic remarked, "It is the most damnable business in which a man ever engaged." Another, who had abandoned the traffic, was asked why he gave up such a lucrative business, and replied as follows:—

"In looking over my account book one day I counted up the names of forty-four men who had been regular customers of mine, most of them for years. Thirty-two of these men, to my certain knowledge, had gone down to a drunkard's grave, and ten of the remaining twelve were then living, confirmed sots! I was appalled and horrified. To remain in such a dreadful, degrading, and murderous trade, I could not; hence I abandoned it."

It is not merely the retail dealer, or low tavern-keeper on whom the responsibility of the traffic, and the curse that ever accompanies it, shall rest. The great manufacturers, the wholesale dealers, the respectable wine and spirit merchants, the men of vast wealth, gotten by wrong, the great landlords and owners of vast estates, the members of parliament and great capitalists who are regarded as the bulwarks of the country, these are equally guilty with the vulgar publican, who is their mere factor for the performance of the ignoble work, of which they are ashamed. Nay, as the prime agents and chief supporters of the ungodly traffic are they not much *more* guilty than he?

"It is the capital of the rich," wrote Rev. W. E. Channing, "which surrounds men with temptation to self-murder. The retailer takes shelter under the wholesale dealer, from whom he purchases the pernicious draught, and has he not a right to do so? Can we expect *him* to be sensitive, when he treads in the steps of men of reputation?"

No morbid sympathy with the agents of the traffic should

prevent our arriving at just conclusions as to its enormity. No garments of respectability can hide its horrid loathsomeness. Wrap it in silk, clothe it in purple, bedeck it with the ermine of the law, it is still the same grinning skeleton, fetid with the odour of the grave. Wrong is wrong for ever, and no sanctions of the law can make it right. The whole business is essentially dishonest. It gives no worthy equivalent for the hard-won earnings of its victims. It is a crying fraud. Its factors are the chief agents and allies of Satan in beguiling men to their everlasting ruin. Like human ghouls, they batten on the blood and lives of their fellow-men. They heap up colossal fortunes by the ruin of others. They rear their houses on a pile of their victim's bones. Their gold and their silver is cankered. The rust of them shall be a witness against them. Gouts of blood are on every coin. The palaces they build are haunted with the spectres of the souls they wreck. Let them get some honest calling; nor bring the wolf of want howling at their neighbour's door, that they may live in luxury. Let them bethink them of the fact that they are every year sending down sixty thousand hapless victims—fathers, husbands, brothers, wives—to a drunkard's grave and to a drunkard's hell.

A hundred years ago, that stern iconoclast of wrong, John Wesley, wrote thus of the unholy trade: "The men who traffic in ardent spirit, and sell to all who will buy, are poisoners-general; they are murderers of His Majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither does their eye pity or spare. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. The curse of God is on their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell. Blood, blood, is there; the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood. And canst thou hope, O man of blood, though thou art clothed in scarlet, and fine linen, and fareest sumptuously every day, canst thou hope to deliver down the field of blood to the third generation? Not so; there is a God in heaven; therefore thy name shall be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, both body and soul, thy memorial shall perish with thee."

It is no defence to quote the authority of the law, the license of the Government. No man, nor body of men, have any moral right to issue or to receive such a license as that. "Licensed," to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death; "Licensed" to set men's souls on fire with fire of hell;

"Licensed to make the strong man weak,  
Licensed to lay the brave man low;  
Licensed, the wife's fond heart to break  
And make the orphan's tears to flow.

"Licensed to do thy neighbour harm,  
Licensed to kindle hate and strife;  
Licensed to nerve the robber's arm,  
Licensed to whet the murderer's knife.

"Licensed, where peace and quiet dwell,  
To bring disease, and want, and woe;  
Licensed to make this world a hell,  
And fit man for a hell below."

Of what avail will be such a "license" as that when], the  
Righteous Judge shall make inquisition for blood?